

17
A
SERMON

AT THE
FUNERAL
OF THE

Lady Dorothy Norton,

Lately DECEAS'D,

The RELICT of *Sir John Norton,*
of Rotherfield in Hantshire.

Preach'd in the Parish Church of *East-Tysted,*
September 23d. 1703.

By J. Manningham
By THOMAS MANNINGHAM, D.D.
and Chaplain in Ordinary to Her MAJESTY.

L O N D O N :

Printed for *Sam. Smith* and *Benj. Walford*, at the
Prince's Arms in *St. Paul's Church-yard*, MDCCLIII.

SERMON

FUNERAL

Preached by

The Reverend Sir John Norton
of Rotherhithe



Preached in the Parish Church of St. John
St. Andrew's, 1705.

By WILLIAM MACKENZIE, M.A.
and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON

Printed for J. and W. Smith and R. Waller, at the
Printers, in Pall-mall, near St. James's Church.

N
Con
con
wer
rea
wh
app
had
pre
of
you
fer
ster
any
Pub
ana

To the Worshipful

JOHN EYRE,
JAMES WORSELEY, } Esquires,
RICHARD COBBE, }

Much Honour'd Gentlemen,

MR S. Catharine Burton, my Lady Norton's Heir, and you Gentlemen, her Executors, have express'd your Desires, which are Commands to me, of making this Sermon Publick; concluding that it would be acceptable to many who were not present at the delivering of it, to see and read that Image and Character of her Ladyship; which in your Judgments (and I desire no better to appeal to) I have so truly drawn.

It was so late at Night when I preach'd, that I had not time to deliver all the Matter which I had prepar'd upon that Subject, the Unconceivable Joys of Heaven; the Heads and main Substance of it you had then, tho' not all the Enlargements and Inferences as they are now Printed: But the Character you will find to be just as you heard it, without any Material Alteration.

It is above Sixteen Years since I Preach'd and Publish'd a Funeral Sermon upon Sir John Norton; and now I have done the same Office for our Dear

A 2 Friend,

The Dedication.

Friend, *his Excellent Lady* : *In both their Characters I hope I have kept within the Limits of Truth, having Represented those Worthy Persons to the World, as their Qualifications and Virtues appear'd to me; only this thing every Reader may easily observe, that the great Love and Esteem that I had for Them Both, runs through all my Expressions.*

They were the first Patrons I had, and 'tis a mighty Satisfaction to me, when I consider, how Instrumental I have been, in Assisting Them to obtain the True Immortality; and the Bright Reflection of it too, a Lasting Name.

They greatly oblig'd me by many Favours conferr'd upon me in their Life-time; but much more, by leaving me such plentiful Matter at their Deaths, for their just Commendation: And there is nothing that I so much desire as this, from any of my Benefactors; who shall be sure, upon proper Occasions, to have all the Force and Energy of my Gratitude, if they have but Virtues to sustain it.

Most Worthy Gentlemen,

I am your Affectionate Friend,

and Obliged Servant,

Tho. Manningham.

A

Funeral Sermon, &c.

I COR. II. 9.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have enter'd into the heart of Man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love him.

THESE Words are generally apply'd to the setting forth the *Inconceivable Glory and Happiness of the other Life*, and it shall be my present Business to make use of them to the same purpose.

They are first read in the Prophet *Isaiah*, C. 64. v. 4. and apply'd by the Apostle to the Manifestation of that *Mysterious Wisdom*, which we meet with in the Go-

B

spel;

spel; of which, *Immortality*, or Eternal Life, as 'tis reveal'd by Christ, is the principal part, towards which all the rest do tend, and with which the whole Dispensation is to be compleated: And therefore this Prophetical and Sublime Expression of an Inconceivable Excellency of Glory ordain'd and prepar'd for those who love God, as *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor Heart conceiv'd*; may most properly be made use of, to set forth the Greatness of the Joys of Heaven, wherein the Mystery of our Salvation will terminate at last: And tho' this Happiness be in part discover'd, yet still it remains in a greater Measure conceal'd; for as to our Knowledge of that State, we are still under the Bondage of many Figurative Expressions and Emblems; and in several respects it doth not yet appear what we shall be.

Wherefore in my following Discourse, I shall make it my Business to shew,

I. How far, and in what respect our *future Happiness* is already reveal'd, and may be known.

II. In what respect it is still an *Unknown State*.

I. How far, and in what respect our future Happiness is already reveal'd, and may be known.

1. The Gospel plainly acquaints us with the *Nature* and *Quality* of our future Happiness.

Were Men left wholly to their own Conjectures concerning the Happiness of another Life, I suppose their Fancies would figure out to themselves a sort of *Sensual Paradise*; for if we except the Thoughts of some few Contemplative Men, this has been the most prevailing Opinion in the World. The Ancient Poets, the Grosser sort of *Jews*, and the *Mahometan* People have all conspir'd in this Notion: The Superstition of Modern *Pagans*, as well as of those in former times, does run out mainly into the same Fancy; their Opinions of a future Happiness amounting only to this Conceit, that when they die, they shall pass into a better Country than their own, and there enjoy the same Worldly Pleasures which they have tasted here, but

in a greater Measure and Degree. There is no wonder that their Expectations should be so dull and low; for 'tis not possible for those who indulge their Sensual Natures, to think that any thing can be a Happiness to them, that is not suited to a Sensual Life, and to such Appetites by which they taste and estimate all their Pleasures.

But now, the Revelations of Christ set another sort of Happiness before us, and raise our Minds to the Apprehension of *Spiritual* and *Celestial* Joys, and such as can be relish'd only by purify'd Hearts: And tho' some of the *Language* and *Images* which the Scriptures make use of to represent our future Happiness, be suited to the lowest Capacities, and run upon such Metaphors as suggest to the Imagination sensible and Worldly Delights; yet to prevent all mean and unworthy Expectations, there are other Descriptions added, which cannot but fill the Mind with pure and exalted Conceptions; as the *Having an Inheritance with the Saints in Light*; the *being made like unto Angels*; the *seeing God as he is*, &c.

The Laws and Rules of Holy Living which are given us in the Gospel, do continually

tinually inculcate on our Minds the *Spiritual Nature* of our Reward : For we must deny our selves many Worldly and Corporal Satisfactions, that we may be fit to enjoy those which are promis'd us hereafter ; and we must enrich our selves with *Dispositions* which are directly contrary to all Sensual Affections, that we may be qualify'd for our future Blessedness : And in many Places of those Holy Writings, the Love of this *present World* is signally condemn'd, to be a perpetual Admonition to us, that God would have us place our Love on him, who has prepared other sort of Pleasures for us, than what this present State of things can give us. Nay, to afford us a further Conviction that all our future Joys shall be *Spiritual*, even that *Body* which we shall receive at the Resurrection is to be purify'd and spiritualiz'd, to be of different Qualities from Flesh and Blood, which cannot enter into Heaven ; that there may remain nothing in us to debase those Celestial Joys wherewith we shall be fill'd.

2. The Gospel gives an undoubted *Certainty* of this our *Spiritual* Reward : Which
question-

questionless is the main thing that concerns us in this Life, and wherein the peculiar Advantage of our Religion does consist.

The very Nature of the *Soul* is such, that by Reflection on its self, and its own Powers, it becomes inwardly Conscious of being design'd by God for an Immortal State ; but *what* Happiness it shall find in that State, and what *sure grounds* there are for *it* to rely on, is clearly discover'd only in the Gospel.

Some of the *Contemplative* Men of ancient Times, as the *Platonists* more especially, endeavour'd to perswade themselves and others, that if they liv'd vertuously in this Life, when they departed, their Souls should escape from their Bodies, as from a Prison ; they should ascend into Celestial Regions , they should understand the Frame of the World, and the Fortune of Empires ; enjoy the Society of those *Heroes* who were gone before 'em, and receive an exceeding Pleasure from the Glory which their Noble Actions had rais'd in this World: They were likewise of Opinion, That many other unknown and unexpressible Satisfactions should be communicated to
them,

them, as a Reward for the *Wisdom* and *Vertue* they had *tought* and *practis'd* in the World ; and for their having been highly *Beneficial* to Mankind, and to the *particular* Governments in which they liv'd.

This was the most plausible *Scheme* of Future Happiness, with which the wiser Heathen *animated* themselves to great Exploits, and *comforted* themselves under great Calamities ; and perhaps 'tis as *Rational* as the Spring of Natural Thought can of it self rise unto.

But then, where was their *Certainty* ? What Evidence and Security had they for this Expectation ? Why might not all this be nothing but a bright Tract of the Imagination, or an indulgent Conjecture proceeding from Self-Love, and heighten'd by an Original Pride of becoming like unto God in their *own* Way and Method ? What *Voice* had they from Heaven, to signify to *them* that they were design'd for that Place ? What *sure Oracle* did they appeal to, for the Truth of such things as they could not otherwise know ? What *Divine Person* had they amongst 'em to declare that all these things were agreeable to the Eternal Coun-
fel

fel of God, and would infallibly come to pass? These were Proofs and Evidences they could not pretend to; the *Certainty* of a Future State of Glory is our Privilege who live under the Revelations of Christ; He has given us the sure Words of Eternal Life; He has set our Immortality in a clear Light; He has given us a Demonstration of our Reward in his own Resurrection from the Dead, and his own Ascension into Heaven; He has made some Discoveries of his *Glorify'd Body* in Visions of exceeding Brightness; He caught up *St. Paul* to the third Heaven, and open'd strange Scenes of Glory to his beloved Disciple *St. John*; and the one has testify'd that he heard unutterable Words, and the other that he saw the Thrones and Crowns that were prepar'd for those who overcame: We have Prophecies, and Miracles, and Variety of *Witnesses* to appeal to for the *Certainty* of our Future Happiness.

Besides, we do not only rely upon the *general Goodness* of God, whereby he is inclin'd to make his Rational Creatures happy; for this may be forfeited by Sin and Rebellion; and then what shall appease his
just

just Indignation, or what shall retrieve his *second Love*? Behold therefore, the inestimable Advantage of us Christians! For we have the true Knowledge of a *Mediator* and a *Sacrifice*; we are acquainted with that *Mysterious Way* in which God will be reconcil'd to Man; we know that our Redeemer liveth and maketh Intercession for us; that he has a *peculiar Kingdom* allotted to him, and that all his faithful Servants shall partake of the Glory which he has purchas'd. Our right therefore to Heaven is made firm and establish'd to us by *Covenant* or *Contract*; and as we increase in Holiness we enter upon some Degrees of our Reward.

God has not been sparing in giving us Testimonies, Motives and Reasons for our Belief and Hope; and if we make good use of these, we shall be very well contented to tarry for the *perfect Knowledge* of our Happiness, since we are sure that we shall one Day possess it in its Fulness; and that that Happiness must be exceeding great and precious, which is so leisurely introduc'd by such preparatory Methods; and in which all the Designs of God are to be consummated, that fall in with that

Platform of infinite Wisdom and Goodness that relates to us. And therefore

3. We may in some Measure be said to know even the *Greatness* of our future Happiness; not in a positive Sense, or by way of clear Idea; but by Inference and Conclusion: By considering how 'tis represented to us by the most *Glorious* things that we are acquainted with, by Crowns and Kingdoms, and all the Earthly Majesty we know, without the Cares and Envies that attend it; by Truth, and Love, and Peace, and Joy, and all the inward *Moral Heaven* we can here arrive to; by sweet Societies, and endearing Friendships, and by the most rational Pleasures that wise and suitable Conversation can afford us; by Contemplation and Devotion, and all the Divine Passions that we are able to experience in the Exercise of Religious Duties. Put all these together, and then tell me, if that Happiness must not be *Great*, exceeding *Great*, of which all these delightful, and affecting things are but a faint Resemblance.

II. Let

II. Let us enquire in what respect our future Happiness is still an *unknown* State.

Now this may be quickly resolv'd : For our Happiness being a Matter of *Sense*, it can be truly known only by Experience ; and the Happiness of the next World consisting in such *Sensations* as depend upon another sort of *Body* than what we now have ; and in such Spiritual Joys, as shall result from a more *perfect* *Manifestation of God*, than what we are now acquainted with ; and shall be receiv'd by larger and nobler *Faculties* than our Souls are now conscious of ; in a better and freer way of Perception, than what our present State, or Union which this World will allow ; upon this account it is, that no Language, no Revelation, no present Notices and Experiences, no Images or Ideas on which our Knowledge now depends, can ever make us fully understand our future Happiness : But then all this amounts to no more, but that Happiness is not a Matter of *Notion*, but of *Enjoyment* ; and that it can be no otherwise known, than as it is *possessed*.

Now tho' our future Happiness, for these Reasons, cannot be perfectly known in this Life; yet so much of it may be discern'd as will serve to answer our Natural Instinct, to feed our Capacity, to animate our Endeavours, to enable us to subdue our evil Desires, and to support us under Temptations and Troubles. For we know that there is a *Reward* designed for us; we know the *Nature* and *Quality* of it, that it is Heavenly and *Spiritual*; we know that it will be compleat, both in respect to Soul and Body, and answerable to the utmost Excellency of that Order and Rank of Beings in which we are created; we know that the Substance of it will be *Moral Goodness*, or an Improvement in Knowledge and Love, that the Additionals or External Crowns will be inexpressibly Glorious, by our being present with Christ, and having our Conversation with Angels; and we know that all this inward and outward State of Happiness will endure to all Eternity: And surely this is sufficient to make it a powerful Motive to obey him who will so greatly reward us; to follow those Laws and Directions which will lead us to
this

this Happiness ; and patiently to undergo those Afflictions which will increase our future Glory. If we be Masters of these Thoughts, and have workt them into the full Perswasion of our Minds ; then may we be said in some Measure to know our future Happiness ; and that which is still *Unknown*, will only be a further *Advantage* to it, by raising in us new Esteems, vaster Expectations, and a greater Vehemency of Desire.

I shall draw some Inferences from what has been said, and so proceed to the *Character*.

1. General and indefinite Apprehensions of future things will serve to make us very Religious, and very obedient, if we have but a Probity of Mind, and have laid a good Foundation in Humility ; and without these Qualities, the clearest Knowledge of things, and the finest Subtilty of Thought, will contribute but little to a true Improvement in Goodness : If God tells us that he will be our exceeding great Reward ; and he who sets upon the Throne shall assure us, that he who overcometh shall inherit all things ; have we not enough

to

to encourage us in all Duties, and Undertakings in Religion? If God promises to make us happy, 'tis a very untoward Behaviour to suspend our Belief, till he tells us *how*, and in what *particular* manner he will do it: He will do it as a loving Father, and as an Omnipotent God; he will do it for the sake of Christ, and as a faithful Performer of the Covenant we are under: If these general Reasons and ways will not persuade us to trust our selves with God, 'tis a Sign that we are more desirous of knowing his secret Counsels, than of being blessed by the gracious Event of them.

When indeed our Faith is well grounded on the plain Revelations of God, and we acquiesce in his general Promises, I do not know that we are any where forbid to elevate our Minds and Conceptions about such Divine Matters as far as we can carry them: On the contrary, I think it a noble and improving Amusement to contemplate sensible things only as the Patterns and Representations of what are Eternal; to walk about this World with a Soul that is as it were transforming every Object it meets

meets with, into some Image and Degree of Heaven; to revolve the Promises and Hopes which God has given us in Christ, till they become a sort of Evidence and full Conviction to us; till they appear so great a Reality that no Objections can lessen, no Temptations can undermine.

'Tis hardly possible for the Minds of very Religious and Devout People to be kept from meditating on something more in this Matter, than what is expressly reveal'd, and from running out into humble Enquiries concerning some *Circumstances* of our future State which are not plainly made known: When our Faith is strong and sound at the bottom, this Holy Curiosity which proceeds from an ardent Desire of being with Christ, and not from any Sceptical Humour, is not blameable; 'tis what *St. Austin* and his devout Mother attempted a little before her Death; when, as he himself has related it, they abstracted their Minds, as far as they could, from all material Phantasms, ascended in Contemplation to the Fountain of all Truth and Goodness, rais'd their Souls into such vehement Aspirations after God, that they
seem'd

seem'd to enjoy some *Moments* of that Beatitude after which they so earnestly enquir'd. *Aug. Conf. L. 9. c. 10.*

To gasp after such Discoveries, is sometimes the unquenchable Thirst of Divine and Heavenly Minds, when they have been heated with Thoughts of God, and our future Glory : And tho' 'tis the peculiar Advantage of our Eternal Happiness, that it cannot be fully reach'd by the Imagination and Conception of Man, yet 'tis an Accession to the Divine Life, that we are able to refine and sublimiate our Desires above all the Delights that this World contains ; 'tis an exceeding Pleasure to soar so high in a devout Thoughtfulness about what God has prepar'd for those who love him, as in a manner to lose the Sight of *this Earth*, tho' at the same time we cannot get so clear a Prospect of *Heaven*, as we would.

2. If our Eternal Happiness be of such a *Spiritual Nature* as I have shewn it to be, then none but those who have made some Progress in the Christian Life, can be thoroughly affected with any Discourses about it : Spiritual Joys can make no Impression upon

upon Sensual Hearts, are no Argument, no Motive to them ; so that, that which conceals this Happiness from such, is not only the *Excellency* of things, but the *Viciousness* of that Nature they carry about 'em ; such must be first awaken'd by the Terrors of the Lord, and by the Dread of Eternal Punishments, before Everlasting Life can prevail upon their Desires. And in what a slavish Condition are those, who are capable of being govern'd by nothing but a Principle of *Fear* ? Whereas the Love of God, and the Hopes of Glory are the genuine Motives of the Gospel, which alone can inspire us with a Zeal of Duty, and with a free and generous Obedience.

3. Since the Substance of our Happiness is Moral Goodness, sincere Righteousness, or an holy Nature, we may in this Life arrive to some Anticipations of that Glory which relates to our Souls, or Spiritual Beings : Holy Thoughts, Pious Affections, and Divine Joys, may afford us some weak Relish, some gradual Discovery of that *inward* State of Blessedness which we shall hereafter enjoy in a more perfect manner. The more Vertuous we grow, the more

D

Conscious

Conscious we are of our own Immortality, and the more we advance in the Christian Life, and the more Pleasure we find in Piety; we more and more experience the Favour of God, and perceive more of Heaven in our Souls. True Spiritual Knowledge does not so much consist in Sharpness of Thoughts, or in clear and distinct Conceptions, as in having such Convictions upon us as shall raise our Admiration and Reverence, inflame our Love, increase our Hope and our Assurance of Heaven; he truly knows God, who is greatly affected with his Goodness, Wisdom and Power; and he has the best Conception of Eternal Life, who finds that the Hope and Certainty of it, gives him such a Delight as is superiour to all the other Passions of his Soul, as gives him a Victory over this World, and fits and prepares him for the full Possession of the next.

Let us use our selves to such Meditations as these; and let us take a frequent View of the precious Promise of Eternal Life, which is made us in Christ Jesus; let it so dwell upon our Minds, that we may perceive the real Influence of it upon the

the whole Conduct of our Lives. Whenever we experience any good thing that is very affecting to us in this Life, then let us raise our Thoughts a little higher, and consider what God has prepared for them who love him : When we are encompass'd with Afflictions and Troubles, of which this World has great Store ; then let us comfort and sustain our selves with the Hopes of that Joy that is set before us : And whenever our Souls are sensibly touch'd and delighted either in Prayers or Praises, or in the Performance of any other holy Duties ; then let us reason with our selves, if it be so delightful to converse with God under all our present Weaknesses and Necessities both of Mind and Body ; then what a Transcendent Pleasure will it be, to see God as he is, to worship before his Throne, and to dwell with him for ever !

But tho' we be discoursing and meditating so *imperfectly* of our future State, yet we doubt not, but the *Incomparable Lady*, our *Dear Departed Sister*, is already let into those Degrees of Happiness and Glory, which our Conceptions cannot reach ;

and is in Expectation of greater : Which She, and all the Faithful shall receive when Christ shall come to conclude and perfect his Kingdom, and to be glorify'd and admir'd in all his Saints : For a Life led with such *Faith*, such *Vertues*, and such *Devotion*, as hers was ; with a Faith so stedfast, with Vertues so useful, with a Devotion so constant and prudent, can never fail of being consummated into Glory. I speak before many who have been long Witnesses and intimate Companions too of *Her* excellent Conversation, and before others who have richly enjoyed the gracious Effects of that Faith of hers which always workt by Love.

Sir Nicholas
Stuart's.

A great part of her Education was in a very *Worthy Family* well known to all who are here present ; where she saw nothing but Religion, and Regularity, Purity, and Modesty, tender Care, and sweet Affections : From thence she was not removed, till with the Choice and Approbation of her best Friends, as well as her own, she was happily joyn'd in an *Honourable Marriage* : And who is there among us who does not remember the wife
Love,

Love, the mutual Endearments, the Union of Hearts and of Tempers, equally great, equally generous, that were remarkable in that *Renowned Couple*: Always Concord and pure Affection between themselves, always ready to oblige others; always improving the same Friendships, always shining with the same Honours which were universally paid 'em. No Offspring indeed, no Descendants from that *Honourable Pair*; they left nothing behind 'em but what can never die, the *Memory of their Vertues*: And I hope that *Worthy Gentleman*, who now succeeds to Norton Pawlet, Esq; to their Estate, will carry on the *same Vertues*; and never forget, how that *Rotherfield* has been a *Name of Honour* for many Years.

In the Dedication of that Sermon I preached at Sir *John's* Funeral, I proposed to *Her Ladyship* in the Depth of her Sorrow, to shew her Concern for her *Dear Departed Husband*, not in fruitless Lamentations and dark Retirements, but what was a clearer Argument of her Wisdom and Love, *by doing all things in Honour of the Deceas'd the whole remainder of her Days*;

Days ; by continuing the same Acts of Charity, keeping up the same decent Hospitality, improving the same Friendships, respecting the Clergy which he so truly lov'd, maintaining the same Constancy in attending on the Publick Worship of God, and persevering in the same Faith : All which she has made good in so singular a manner, that what was then humbly offer'd as something of *Direction*, is now become most justly her *Commendation* and her *Character*.

Her *Grief* at first was very sharp, it was deep and solemn for some time after ; but then she overcame it so far, as to make it manageable in it self, and serviceable for the Exercise of many Vertues : She turn'd it into Duty and tender Respect for the Memory of a most Deserving and most Beloved *Husband*, who died above *Sixteen* Years since, *full of Honour* ; but his Name has now received a vast Accession of Glory, from that most Vertuous, Honourable, and Discreet Management of her self through all her *Widowhood* ; which makes her Exemplary with a peculiar Eminency in this Age, in which so many of
her

her Sex, under the same State and Condition, and in like fortunate Circumstances, have so very lamentably miscarried.

And really she had a Soul compleatly made for Providence to intrust with the *intire Management* of a *great Estate*: For where could the abundance of this World be placed with less Danger, than where the *Passions* were subdued, and *Prudence* was the governing Talent? And where could it be placed with greater advantage, than where there was a *noble Heart* to make a good Use of it, and a *pious and discerning Mind* to give right *Ends* and *Measures*?

As God Almighty blessed her with a plentiful Estate, and a long Prosperity, so she glorified him with a most *Exemplary Moderation* in the midst of that abundance: No Epicurism, no costly Delicacies, no Ostentation of Life were seen within her Gates; She always kept to the *plainest Diet* her self, and made only Substantial Provision for her Friends: Her Table was according to the ancient Genius of this Nation, *Plentiful* and *Decent*, and always ministring large Supplies for the more *Indigent*

digent Families that were about her : Whenever her Entertainments were enlarged, the Refreshments of the *Poor* were so too ; She daily relieved their Bowels, she had their constant Prayers, and now she has their most piercing Sorrows ; not they only, but all the *Neighbourhood* will convey to Posterity, what happy Times they enjoyed in the Days of Sir *John Norton and his Lady*.

To have a constant Spring of Generosity in ones Soul, and to have an ample Estate from Providence wherein to exercise such generous Inclinations, and then to have a just Discretion to bound it all within proper Limits ; is such a Mixture of *Vertue* and *Happiness* as never fails of having the Admiration of Mankind : And I am sure all who knew my *Lady Norton*, know how properly this Character belongs to her. When I say *all who know her*, I appeal to a great Number indeed, and those of the most considerable Rank and Quality : For she had a large Acquaintance with *Persons of Honour*, who were made more so, by her Conversation and Friendship : In the Course of her Days
She

She convers'd with many of the *Wiseſt* of our Nobility and Gentry; and I may truly ſay, almoſt with equal Wiſdom: They had no need of deſcending to common Topicks to entertain her with Diſcourſe, they might keep up their Underſtandings, and their Judgments to the height; for ſhe had a Reliſh for the beſt Sence they were Maſters of, and would ſometimes improve it too; She ſeldom talkt *ordinary News*, the uſual Supply of thoſe who want a good Stock of Natural Parts; but when it was obtruded upon her, ſhe quickly diſmiſs'd it with a few lively and pertinent Reflections, and then kept up a Converſation with ſuch natural and ready Sentiments, mingled with ſuch obliging Expreſſions, as ſhewed a real Reſpect towards thoſe ſhe converſt with, and raiſed in them a due Eſteem of her.

So ſtrict was the *Purity* of her Life, ſo unblemiſhed her Reputation, ſo curious her Modeſty, which ſhe guarded with the peculiar Maſteſty of an Excellent Underſtanding, that though ſhe could not avoid the having an Acquaintance in her

E

Time.

Time, with some young Gentlemen of Estates, and Families, who were not altogether subdued in their Manners; yet few of them ever dar'd to utter an unbecoming word, or a prophane Jest before her; She always had the Ascendant over them by her Character, and she aw'd 'em by her better Sense; they found a Necessity of being Virtuous in her Company, or of dissembling their Faults with a handsome Mien: And I heartily wish, the Ladies would not so easily part with their *Prerogative* of giving Laws to Conversation; but would rigidly exact that *Tribute of Decency in Discourse*, which all Men are bound to pay them.

Her Apprehension was quick, which made her capable of just Resentments; but her Wisdom set her above *common Passions*: She would take the best ways of curing those *Follies* in others which more nearly concern'd her, without giving her self much Disturbance; for a true Greatness of Mind inclines one to bear much with those who want it.

She

She carried such a Wisdom and Gravity with her in all her Speeches and Actions, that when I was her *Pastor*, I reverenc'd her as my *Mother*; and when after my remove I held a Correspondence with her as a *Friend*, her *Letters* were as instructive, as they were kind.

I cannot but reckon it as one of the particular Blessings of her Life, that she dwelt in the Neighbourhood of an *Excellent Gentry*, among whom she saw many of her own *Virtues* shine; and in the Neighbourhood likewise, of a Venerable, Wise, and Pious *Clergy*; whose Persons she lov'd, whose Abilities and Virtues she duely esteem'd, and with whose *Respects* and *Prayers* she liv'd and dy'd.

The Sickness which carried her out of this World was accompanied with a *suddain decay of Spirits*; which made her Death surprizing to her Friends, though it could not be so to her self; since her whole Life was a Preparation for it.

Not only in her Health, but amidst her very *Diversions* too, she minded the *one thing necessary*: For how often has she stole away from Company in an *After-*

noon to read her *Psalms* and *Chapters* for the Day; that when she paid her Civility to her Friends, she might not neglect her Devotions to God: When you saw her most chearful, she was inwardly recollected; she would shew a good *Humour*, without dissipating her Thoughts: When you imagined she was wholly taken up with Observances to you, the better part of her Soul was fix'd upon her God.

The best thing we can say of some Persons upon such like Occasions, is that they exercis'd some few Acts of Religion in the Time of their Sickness; but strict Vertue, and constant Piety went through the whole Course of her Life.

By a wise Distribution of her Worldly Goods, and by a Number of *considerable Charities*, which she has allotted to several Parishes, she had put things in a good Order for her more easy Departure: And according to her Wishes, and *Natural Tendernefs*, God gave her a quiet Passage out of this Life, without much *Pain*, without any great Trial of her Patience.

She

She seem'd of late to have had some *abodings* upon her, that she was drawing to her latter End ; to omit many which her near Friends and Domesticks did observe, I was made sensible of it by some of her *late Letters*, and especially by one which contain'd many tender and wise Reflections occasion'd by the Death of her dear Sister Mrs. Cobbe, a Person of extraordinary Piety, and whose Conversation was in Heaven above *Threescore* Years before she went thither.

Her *Ladyship* was constant to her Sacraments, and Preparative Fasts ; but as to any *Rigid Austerities*, you cannot expect to hear of such, in a Life so *Innocent* and so *Wise* : No, she was as far from any Superstition, as she was from the *Habitual* Neglect of any thing that belong'd to solid Piety.

She never had any *Scruples* in Religion upon her, as far as I could observe, which must be attributed to a right Education, a strong Judgment, and a Constancy in Holy Duties.

To conclude, Her Goodness was sincere and equal, early and lasting, and God
bles'd

blest'd her with a prosperous Life, and an easy Death ; She was greatly beloved, and is now universally lamented.

Whilst her pious and happy Soul rests with God and Christ above, let us most decently commit *these Remains* of her, to the Earth ; joyning them to the Ashes of her *Dearly Beloved Husband* ; and let us preserve the *Memory* of *them both* among the most *precious Treasures* of our Minds.

And O ! That *all* of us who are here met upon this *sad* and *solemn* Occasion, would so order that Remainder of our Days which God shall allot us, that we may be meet to be Partakers of those Joys, which *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive* ; but yet such, as God hath prepar'd for all those who truly love and serve him.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be all Honour, Glory, Power, Praise and Thanksgiving, both now, and for evermore. Amen.

FINIS.



d an
and

rests
most
, to
es of
t us
ong
ds.
here
ion,
our
we
oys,
nei-
n to
pre-
and

and
lory,
both